

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBSSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7394
INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABARONE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 ACCRA 2618

LIMDIS

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY; LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, GH, US
SUBJ: ACHEAMPONG'S CONCERN AT SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA

1. SUMMARY: ACHEAMPONG UNEXPECTEDLY CALLED ME IN
APRIL 5 FOR A CONFIDENTIAL ONE-ON-ONE TALK. MAIN
POINTS: SOVIET ENCROACHMENTS IN AFRICA ARE DEEPLY
DISTRUBING; GHANA WILL NEVER GO COMMUNIST BUT NEEDS
MORE HELP FROM THE WEST; THE US SHOULD DO MORE TO
PROMOTE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO RHODESIAN ISSUE; GHANA
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SUPPORTS MOBUTU BUT RECOGNIZES HIS WEAKNESS; AND THAT
I SHOULD SEE HIM FREQUENTLY FOR CANDID DISCUSSIONS.
I JUDGE THAT WHILE ACHEAMPONG IS CONCERNED ABOUT
SOVIET MACHINATIONS, HE IS MORE WORRIED ABOUT GHANA'S
ECONOMIC COLLAPSE AND HIS OWN SURVIVAL AS HEAD OF STATE.
I RECOMMEND CONTINUING TO HELP COUNTRY THROUGH AID
PROGRAMS BUT AVOIDING TOO CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH

ACHEAMPONG HIMSELF. END SUMMARY.

2. I ACCOMPANIED CONGRESSMAN DIGGS TO A CORDIAL MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN OF THE SMC AND HEAD OF STATE GENERAL ACHEAMPONG ON APRIL 4 (REPORTED SEPTEL). I WAS THEREFORE SURPRISED ON FOLLOWING MORNING TO BE ASKED TO SEE GENERAL ACHEAMPONG AGAIN. I DID SO AT NOON AND HE GREETED ME VERY WARMLY. HE RECEIVED ME ALONE AND BEGAN OUR 45 MINUTE CONVERSATION BY SAYING HE HAD WANTED FOR SOME TIME TO HAVE A PRIVATE AND "VERY CONFIDENTIAL" DISCUSSION ABOUT VARIOUS MATTERS TO WHICH HE ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE. HE FELT HE COULD NOT DISUCSS THEM IN LARGER GROUP OF PREVIOUS DAY.

3. THE SOVIET THREAT--INTERNAL: ACHEAMPONG SAID HE HAD BEEN CONCERNED FOR SOME TIME ABOUT INCREASING SOVIET ENCROACHMENT IN AFRICA AND--TO SOME EXTENT--EVEN IN GHANA. HE WANTED TO SHARE THESE CONCERNS WITH ME ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS AND IN DOING SO TO ESTABLISH A CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH ME ON THESE AND RELATED SUBJECTS. I SAID I WELCOMED HIS INITIATIVE, FOR WE ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HIS VIEWS AND THOSE OF OTHER AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE. SOVIETS WERE INCREASINGLY ACTIVE THROUGHOUT AFRICA, ACHEAMPONG SAID, AND EVEN IN GHANA, "WHICH COULD NEVER GO COMMUNIST," SOVIETS WERE WORKING ASSIDUOUSLY TO UNDERMINE HIS GOVERNMENT. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE SOVIETS WERE WORKING TO CREATE UNREST AMONG STUDENTS AND "CERTAIN WORKERS" IN GHANA AND ATTEMPTING TO SABOTAGE GHANA'S EFFORTS TO CORRECT
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ITS ADMITTEDLY SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, GENERAL ACHEAMPONG AVOWED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE USING DIRECT PAYMENTS TO THESE STUDENT AND WORKER GROUPS, AS WELL AS "OTHER MEANS," TO UNDERMINE CONFIDENCE IN GHANA'S ECONOMY AND ITS FUTURE. HE WANTED THEREFORE TO REASSURE THE US THAT DESPITE "CERTAIN NEWSPAPER STORIES IN THE US," GHANA WAS EMPHATICALLY NOT "TILTING TOWARD THE EAST." GHANA KNEW WHO ITS REAL FRIENDS WERE, HE SAID, AND FELT A CONTINUING NEED FOR SUPPORT FROM US. IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, ACHEAMPONG CONTINUED, HE WANTED TO FEEL THAT "GHANA WOULD BE ABLE TO DEPEND ON US--LIKE THE IVORY COAST DEPENDS ON FRANCE."

4. WARMING TO THIS THEME, ACHEAMPONG SAID THAT WHILE GHANA OF COURSE WANTED TO CONTINUE ITS POSTURE OF GENUINE NEUTRALITY, HE HIMSELF KNEW ALL TOO WELL OF SOVIET "CONTAMINATION" HERE THROUGH BOTH MONEY AND THE GRANTING OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDY IN THE USSR

AND OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. ONCE IN THE SOVIET UNION, HE CONTINUED, GHANAIAI STUDENTS AND TRAINEES WERE MORE OFTEN THAN NOT BRAINWASHED AND SOMETIMES "PLAYED THE RUSSIAN GAME" UPON THEIR RETURN TO GHANA. HE SAID THE RUSSIANS ARE AWARE OF AN RESENT GHANAIAI RESISTANCE TO COMMUNISM. THEY UNDERSTAND EQUALLY WELL THAT COMMUNISM CAN ONLY TAKE ROOT IN AFRICA WHEN IT CAN PREY ON POVERTY AND FAMINE. THIS WA WHY HE ATTACHED SUCH IMPORTANCE TO "OPERATION FEED YOURSELF" AND OHTER AGRICULTURAL SCHEMES NOW IN PROCESS DESIGNED TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION AND THUS IMPROVE STANDARD OF LIVING THROUGHOUT GHANA. IN AN ASIDE, HE NOTED THAT HE HAD TALKED ABOUT THIS SUBJECT WITH COMMISSIONER FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING GARDINER EARLIER IN THE DAY AND SAID THAT DR. GARDINER WOULD BE CONTACTING ME LATER WITH AN ADDITIONAL REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE TO GHANA. (COMMENT: MY APRIL 6 MEETING WITH GARDINER IS REPORTED CONFIDENTIAL

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SEPTTEL. I SUSPECT IT WAS GARDINER WHO PRIMED ACHEAMPONG TO CALL ME IN FOR THE CONVERSATION TO SET THE STAGE FOR THIS REQUEST).

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7395

INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

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LIMDIS

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5. RETURNING AGAIN AND AGAIN TO THE THEME THAT GHANA COULD NEVER GO COMMUNIST, GENERAL ACHEAMPONG SAID HE GREATLY APPRECIATED OUR AID PROGRAM HERE AND ESPECIALLY ITS EMPHASIS ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. HE HOPED GHANA COULD CONTINUE TO COUNT ON THIS ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD HELP GHANA LAY THE KIND OF ECONOMIC FOUNDATION THAT WOULD ENSURE THAT COMMUNISM COULD NEVER GAIN A FOOTHOLD HERE. I THANKED THE CHAIRMAN FOR THIS CANDOR AND OFR THIS EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR OUR AID PROGRAM. I WAS ALSO PLEASED THAT OUR AID PROGRAM
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DOVETAILED SO WELL WITH HIS OWN DESIRES TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND SAID I SAW NO REASON TO BE CONCERNED THAT WE WERE CONTEMPLATING TERMINATING OR CUTTING BACK THOSE PROGRAMS.

6. I TOLD THE CHAIRMAN THAT HIS CANDID EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER SOVIET ACTIVITIES HELPED EXPLAIN WHY HE HAD HAMMERED HOME THE POINT SO VIGOROUSLY THAT GHANA WAS NOT "GOING COMMUNIST" IN OUR CONVERSATION OF THE PREVIOUS DAY. I ADDED THAT CONGRESSMAN DIGGS AND I HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY HIS REMARKS BECAUSE WE WERE AWARE OF NO SERIOUS CONCERN IN THE USG ALONG THOSE LINES. ACHEAMPONG SAID HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR THIS, BUT HE SOMETIMES WORRIED THAT BECAUSE OF GHANA'S NEUTRAL POSTURE AND ITS ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, SOME IN THE UNITED STATES MIGHT THINK THAT GHANA WAS FRATERNIZING "TOO MUCH" WITH THE EAST. HE REMINED ME THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME PUBLICITY ABOUT CURRENT SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO RESURRECT SOME OF THEIR OLD AID PROJECTS DATING BACK TO NKRUMAH'S TIME. (IN ANOTHER AIDE, HE SAID THAT NKRUMAH HAD INDEED FRATERNIZED TOO MUCH WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.) DESPITE THIS PUBLICITY, HE CONTINUED, HE WANTED ME TO KNOW THT THERE WAS REALLY ONLY ONE SOVIET PROJECT BEING SERIOUSLY RESURRECTED, A PREFAB CONCRETE SLAB PLANT, AND EVEN THEN, "THEY ARE MAKING US PAY FOR IT*" HE FELT STRONGLY THAT SOVIET

ASSISTANCE WAS ALWAYS "EXPLOITATIVE" AND THAT SOVIET AID IS NEVER GIVEN UNLESS ITS IDEOLOGY, IN AT LEAST SOME MEASURE, WAS ADOPTED.

7. ZIMBABWE: I ASKED HOW HE VIEWED THE ZIMBABWE LEADERSHIP PROBLEM, NOTING THAT HE HAD IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS TALKED WITH VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE CONTENDERS. ACHEAMPONG SAID HE REGARDED BISHOP MUZOREWA AS "THE MOST LIBERAL AND TRUSTWORTHY OF THE LOT." IF A REFERENDUM
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WERE HELD IN ZIMBABWE TOMORROW, HE AVOWED, THE BISHOP WOULD WIN HANDS DOWN. UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, MUZOREWA HAD NO TROOPS AND ACHEAMPONG FEARED THAT THE RESULT OF SUCH REFERENDUM COULD ONLY BE CIVIL WAR. AT THE SAME TIME, HE WAS DISTURBED BY NKOMO'S FREQUENT TRIPS TO MOSCOW AND THE LARGE AMOUNTS OF SOVIET ASSISTANCE THAT ARE BEING FUNNELED TO HIM AND OTHER NATIONALIST LEADERS. GHANA'S OWN HOPE WAS TO AVOID CIVIL WAR IN ZIMBABWE AND TO REACH A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. I SAID WE CERTAINLY SHARED THAT HOPE BUT REGARDED THE LEADERSHIP

STRUGGLE AS AN AFRICAN AFFAIR WHICH MUST BE SETTLED BY THE AFRICANS THEMSELVES. ACHEAMPONG AGREED BUT ADDED THAT HE WISHED THE US WOULD DO MORE "ON THE QUIET" TO PROMOTE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. I SAID THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK QUIETLY TOWARDS THAT GOAL. I THEN TOLD HIM THAT I HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS ONLY HOURS BEFORE TO INFORM HIM THAT WE ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE FORTHCOMING VISIT OF BRITISH FORSEC OWEN TO AFRICA AND THAT HIS EFFORTS HAD OUR FULL SUPPORT. ACHEAMPONG SAID HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR THIS AND ALSO HOPED THE OWEN MISSION WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL.

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8. ZAIRE: TURNING TO ZAIRE, ACHEAMPONG SAID HE
RECOGNIZED THAT THE KATANGAN FORCES COULD NOT HAVE
MOUNTED THE CURRENT OFFENSIVE IN SHABA WITHOUT SOVIET
AND CUBAN SUPPORT. HE DEPLORED THAT SUPPORT AND
REGARDED IT AS DANGEROUS. HE HAD SENT ROVING
AMBASSADOR JOE APPIAH ON A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO
KINSHASA AND HAD HIM DELIVER A LETTER TO MOBUTU FROM
ACHEAMPONG PLEDGING GHANA'S SUPPORT IN THE STURGGLE.
HE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT MOBUTU'S ARMY LEFT
MUCH TO BE DESIRED AND THAT IT BADLY LACKED PROFESSION-
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ALISM AND DISCIPLINE. HE HAD ALSO LENT HIS SUPPORT
TO THE NIGERIAN MEDIATION EFFORT BUT REMAINED DEEPLY
CONCERNED OVER EVENTS IN ZAIRE.

9. SOVIET ENCROACHMENT ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA:
ACHEAMPONG SAID HE SAW A PATTERN OF SOVIET ENCROACH-
MENT IN AFRICA WHICH WAS MOST DISTURBING. MOZAMBIQUE,
HE SAID, WAS ALREADY IN THE SOVIET CAMP, AS WERE ANGOLA
AND UGANDA. IF NKOMO COMES TO POWER IN ZIMBABWE, IT
COULD BE NEXT. THERE WOULD THEN BE AN INEVITABLE
SPILL-OVER EFFECT IN NAMIBIA WITH SOVIET INFECTION
SPREADING ELSEWHERE AS WELL. ZAIRE WAS "SHAKY" AT
BEST AND HE HOPED WE WOULD CONTINUE TO USE OUR
INFLUENCE TO STOP THE FIGHTING THERE. WITH BENIN NOW
APPARENTLY IN THE SOVIET CLUTCHES, AND WITH PODGORNY
AND CASTRO "DOING THEIR MISCHIEF" DURING THEIR

RECENT VISITS TO AFRICA, HE SEES A CONCERTED SOVIET EFFORT TO LINK UP ITS SPHERES OF INFLUENCE TO THE DETRIMENT OF AFRICA AS A WHOLE.

10. HE THEREFORE THOUGHT IT WAS NOW TIME FOR THE WEST, AND SPECIFICALLY THE UNITED STATES, TO COME IN AND HELP SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS AND NOT "LET THE RUSSIANS WIN BY DEFAULT." REITERATING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING VERY CONFIDENTIALLY, ACHEAMPONG SAID THAT FOR THESE REASONS HE HOPED GHANA COULD CONTINUE TO COUNT ON THE MORAL SUPPORT, UNDERSTANDING AND ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES, FOR HE RECOGNIZED THE GHANA NEEDED IT BADLY. HE WOULD NOT EVEN RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT GHANA MAY BE THE NEXT SOVIET TARGET, AND HE HOPED HE COULD DEPEND ON THE UNITED STATES TO ASSIST "IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY." I PRESSED ACHEAMPONG TO BE MORE SPECIFIC WITH RESPECT TO WHAT HE WAS ASKING FOR, BUT HE REVERTED AGAIN TO THE PHRASES MORAL SUPPORT, CONTINUED AID AND ASSISTANCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF HIS PROBLEMS. HE NOTED THAT
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OUR RELATIONS WERE WARM AND CORDIAL AND EXPRESSED HIS STRONG DESIRE TO KEEP THEM THAT WAY. I SAID WE SHARED THAT DESIRE AND AGAIN ASSURED HIM OF OUR INTENTION TO CONTINUE THROUGH OUR AID PROGRAM TO HELP LAY THE KIND OF ECONOMIC FOUNDATION IN GHANA TO WHICH HE ATTACHED SUCH IMPORTANCE. I THEN ADDED THAT WHILE WE WERE PREPARED TO CONTINUE THESE EFFORTS, OUR ASSISTANCE, WHETHER BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL, COULD NOT BEGIN TO SOLVE GHANA'S SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, THE SOLUTIONS TO WHICH MUST BE FOUND AND IMPLEMENTED LOCALLY. ACHEAMPONG SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THIS AND WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR THOSE SOLUTIONS.

11. THE CHAIRMAN SAID HE WANTED TO SEE ME FREQUENTLY AND URGED ME TO COME IN OFTEN FOR CANDID DISCUSSIONS OF THIS KIND. HE ALSO URGED ME TO CONTACT HIS OFFICE DIRECTLY IN SETTING UP SUCH APPOINTMENTS AND "NOT BOTHER" WITH GOING THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS CANDOR, SAID I WOULD VALUE SUCH EXCHANGES IN THE FUTURE AND WOULD TAKE HIM UP ON HIS OFFER.

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12. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ACHEAMPONG RECEIVED ME
IMMEDIATELY AFTER A VISITING IMF TEAM, WHICH PRESUMABLY
BROUGHT HIM MORE BAD NEWS ABOUT THE RAPIDLY
DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION, I HAVE NEVER
SEEM HIM SO AFFABLE AND VOLUBLE. BUT WE MUST TAKE
SOME OF THE ABOVE WITH A GRAIN OF SALT, FOR IT SEEMS
CLEAR THAT HE WAS AT LEAST IN PART TRYING TO PUT
US IN AS RECEPTIVE A FRAME OF MIND AS POSSIBLE
FOR GARDINER'S SUBSEQUENT REQUEST. NEVERTHELESS,
HE APPEARED GENUINELY ALARMED ABOUT SOVIET INCURSIONS
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IN AFRICA AND SINCERE IN EXPRESSING HIS HOPE FOR
QUIET AMERICAN EFFORTS TO COUNTERACT THOSE ACTIVITIES.
ACHEAMPONG, HOWEVER, OBVIOUSLY FEELS VERY INSECURE.
HE HAS EVERY REASON TO FEEL SO, FOR NEITHER HE
PERSONALLY NOR HIS INEPT GOVERNMENT IS POPULAR.

CORRUPTION, INFLATION AND SHORTAGES OF ESSENTIAL
COMMODITIES ARE BECOMING WORSE WITH EVERY PASSING DAY,
AND THESE FACTORS, RATHER THAN ANY SOVIET THREAT,
CONSTITUTE THE REAL DANGERS TO HIS GOVERNMENT.
WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HE CAN REMAIN IN OFFICE MUCH
LONGER WITHOUT A DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN THE ECONOMIC
SITUATION. WHILE CONTINUING TO ASSIST GHANA THROUGH
OUR AID PROGRAMS, THEREFORE, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD
TRY TO AVOID ANY APPEARANCE OF PERSONAL SUPPORT OF,
OR CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH, ACHEAMPONG HIMSELF.
SMITH

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
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